

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-26 and 28-31 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-22 are withdrawn as directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 27 and 32 were previously cancelled. Claims 23 and 31 are amended. Support for amended claim 23 is found throughout the application as originally filed including on page 25, paragraph 4. Support for amended claim 31 is found, for example, in original claim 23. No new matter is added by way of this amendment. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2005/0220675 to Reed *et al.*, *see Office Action*, pages 3-4. Applicants respectfully traverse.

In particular, the Examiner states that Reed discloses a microplate partially made from silicon. According to the Examiner, the microplate can be treated with a hydrophobic coating, such as fluorocarbon. The Examiner asserts that Reed describes that the fluorocarbon coating is located around the wells.

In an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 31 is amended to specify “wherein the microwell holds only one organic cell.” Applicants note that claim 23, which describes that the microwell holds “just one organic cell” was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Reed. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 31, which also specifies that the microwell holds only one organic cell, is also not anticipated by Reed. In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 23-26 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0072116 to Bhatia *et al.*, (“Bhatia”), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,197,575 to Griffith *et al.*, (“Griffith”), *see Office Action*, pages 4-6. Applicants respectfully traverse.

According to the Examiner, Bhatia teaches all of the elements of the instant claims except for a fluorocarbon film, which is coated on the interior surface of the microwells. Nevertheless, the Examiner believes that Griffith remedies the deficiencies of Bhatia. The Examiner states that an

ordinary artisan would have been motivated to use the fluorocarbon polymer coating suggested by Griffith within the wells of Bhatia to form a hydrophobic layer within the well, which would allow the well to be tailored for cell adhesion, for example, by adding extra-cellular matrix proteins.

In an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 23 to specify “wherein the interior surface of said microwells prevents adhesion of the organic cell and facilitates recovery of the organic cell from the microwell.”

Applicants submit that the combination of references describe interior surfaces of microwells that promote, rather than prevent, cell adhesion, and, accordingly, do not facilitate recovery of the organic cell from the microwell, as described in the instant claims. The inner surfaces of the microwells described in Bhatia are coated with collagen, *see* paragraph [0026] of Bhatia. Accordingly, cells would adhere to the inner surfaces of Bhatia’s microwells. Griffith does not remedy these deficiencies since Griffith also teaches that the “functional unit in these micromatrices is the channel containing cells and their exudates (such as extracellular matrix molecules)”, *see* column 3, lines 20-23 of Griffith. Accordingly, the combination of cited references describes interior surfaces of microwells that promote, rather than prevent, cell adhesion.

In view of the foregoing, the combination of references fails to teach or suggest all of the elements of independent claim 23. Dependent claims 24-26 and 28-30, which incorporate all of the features of independent claim 23 are also not rendered obvious by the cited references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

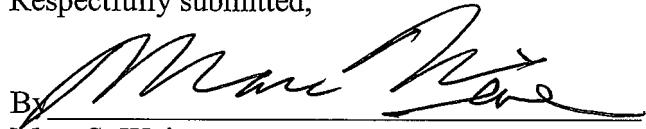
In view of the above amendment and remarks, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Linda T. Parker, Registration No. 46,046, at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Director is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any fees required during the pendency of the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Marc S. Weiner
Registration No.: 32181
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road, Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
703-205-8000